A083

LIBERTARIAN

No .1

Sept. 1957

Published by the Libertarian Society at Sydney University

Since it is not for us to create a plan for the future that will hold for all time, all the more surely, what we contemporaries have to do is the uncompromising critical evaluation of all that exists, uncompromising in the sense that our criticism fears neither its own results nor the powers that be.

—KARL MARX.

ON LIBERTARIANISM

It is not possible to give a thorough account of a set of views in an introduction, or for that matter in a full-scale article. What follows should be taken as an attempt to make some of the major points in the libertarian position; it deals with some of the issues raised in the three articles appearing in this magazine, though not in the same detail and in a more general way.

Politically, the oppositionist and anarchist character of libertarianism comes out most clearly. Libertarians regard the State (meaning that group of institutions which include Parliament, the ministries, the army, law courts and the police force) as the strongest authoritarian force in society. As against the Marxists, who say that the State is merely an instrument of the capitalist class for the protection of its interests, it is the anarchist view that the State has a special interest of its own, namely, that of control (on this view, one can explain why capitalists are frequently found in conflict with the State). No matter what *reasons* may be given for the necessity of accepting State authority or for the extension of State power, it remains a fact that power and control are the dominant State motives, and this at the expense of freedom and private initiative. On this view, there is no possibility of a group or party taking possession of State power and using it to set society free by reform. It follows from this that opposition to State authority is a condition of free political activity, and that the degree of acceptance of this authority is a measure of the servility of the people and groups over which the State holds sway.

Libertarians' view of the Church is similar to their view of the State, that it is an authoritarian, repressive institution, even though the Church has a different way of operating. While theological questions about the existence of a god are spurious, the earthly role of religion and the Church is important. All beliefs in the supernatural have the feature of obscuring the real issues that arise in the day-to-day workings of society. Further, the more powerful Churches require and do have docile,

uncritical adherents. This state of affairs is encouraged by emphasising the servile notions of obedience, of worship and of reverence. Tied in with this is the laying down of repressive sexual and moral codes, support for marriage and the family, restrictions on sexual behaviour, and the subordination of sexual pleasure to procreation. In a word, the Church promotes servility, and the theologians' attempts to justify its authority and its activities by the existence of a god are irrelevant to this. Even if there were a god, libertarians would oppose him also.

Out of these views on the State and the Church emerges the fact that there is a close connection between authoritarianism and repressive moral codes. This comes out most clearly in the case of sex, and libertarian sexual theory should be understood in this light. Contrary to the popular notion of free love as meaning simply promiscuous and indiscriminate sexual behaviour, what is important in free love is the absence of guilt feelings and compulsive tendencies. In turn, the absence of guilt feelings depends, partly at least, on seeing through the notion of sin and, consequently, on seeing through the moralists who put this sort of view forward. In an affair which is marked by the absence of guilt feelings, there will be an increase in sexual pleasure and satisfaction, leading to a lessening or disappearance of neurotic tensions and resulting in a straightforward relationship: a relationship to which both partners will have an objective, realistic approach. You would expect to see this sort of attitude carry over into other situations, into relations with one's family, with one's employer, etc. This suggests generally that free love, which includes seeing through sexual illusions, promotes, and is promoted by, seeing through illusions in other fields.

In general then, one of the main contentions of libertarian theory is that there is a close connection between free activities in one field and those in another. Similarly, authoritarianism and servility extend from one field to another, so that, for example, a person who is credulous about religion, or who is sexually repressed will tend to be servile towards his employer, political bosses and so on, and is likely to have conservative political views.

There is a constant conflict between freedom and authority;

they exist in opposition to one another. It follows from this (and from the anti-moralist view) that libertarianism has no special claims, that there is nothing in it to say that it must or should be followed. Libertarians oppose authority from a specific standpoint, on the basis of specific interests. Those who see that their interests lie in different directions (those who are interested, for example, in securing their position with the aid of authority) will obviously reject libertarian values.

Even if the **word** freedom is used, "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" are simply the **sufficiency** and **security**, the desire for which marks the servile mentality . . . The decline of liberalism could not be more clearly marked than by the association of the name with the advocacy of regimentation, of the "protective" State.

—JOHN ANDERSON, "The Servile State"

ANARCHISM

By George Molnar

Max Nomad's observation that anarchism is a dying creed is largely correct. The chief landmarks of anarchist history are all a matter of the past, and even the last rally of libertarian forces to the field in the Spanish Civil War was witnessed by another, now lost, generation. It is impossible in the light of this to talk to-day of anarchism in a spirit of hopefulness about practical advances or in terms of large-scale aims; what we can say about it will have to be quite different from discussing the political aims of present-day left-wing movements. Events of the last hundred years, especially the story of forty years of successful socialist dictatorship in Russia, make this easy for us to see; but it is not less clear that a different view of anarchism, a view of it as something that will change the whole of society in favour of freedom, has always depended on certain errors. Those who criticise Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin and the rest for being utopian are usually not blind to these errors. As a matter of fact such criticism consists mainly of an exposure of the false optimism of nineteenth century anarchist theory.

It seems to me, nevertheless, that we cannot dispose of anarchism entirely by writing off its futuristic and utopian parts as worthless. There is a streak in anarchist thought which contradicts the utopian elements: certain passages in anarchist writings emphasise present protest and present anti-authoritarianism, and play down the concern with the future and with prospects of achieving massive success. The fact that this sort of attitude (admittedly in a minor, confused and epigrammatic way) was already present in nineteenth century anarchist doctrines is generally ignored by contemporary libertarian sympathisers.

To the initiated as well as to the uninitiated, anarchism is still the search for "*Nowhere*". But to say this is, in my opinion, a misapprehension which ignores certain tendencies in anarchism, and to correct such a one-sided view we have to be reminded that in addition to a considerable amount of

naive speculation anarchism also contains a realistic line of thought on the nature of society. In the course of making this point I want to argue that those who work out this realistic line consistently, by freeing it from its utopian associations, are entitled to claim a stronger connection with traditional anarchism than the mere use of the word "anarchist" as an appropriated label.

It has almost become an historians' convention to regard the beginnings of modern anarchism as being connected with the activities of Michael Bakunin. I will follow this convention, not because of its correctness but because it saves time. Bakunin's anarchism, which was a late development of his personal history, had numerous sources: chiefly the writings of Proudhon and the libertarian aspects of Marx's work. The movement which he personally did much to arouse was similarly inspired and the early history of nineteenth century anarchism is mixed up with the early history of the socialist movement in general. It was not until after the entry of Bakunin and his followers into the First International in the 1860's that a distinct anarchist position emerged from the contest, carried on largely within the International, between Bakuninists and Marxists.

The division between the two parties corresponded, roughly, to the division between the Latin and the Germanic sectors of the socialist movement. Leading issues between them illustrate some of the main anarchist points. State-socialists, as they were contemptuously called, and anarchists were agreed in their aim of bringing about freedom, by which they meant the removal of the oppression, the exploitation and the inequalities from the backs of the masses who suffered from them. The Marxist contention was that this can only be done by the "proletariat" capturing State power and establishing a dictatorship of its own. Such a view is the consequence of the Marxist theory that the State is a mere instrument, a tool of the ruling class for the maintenance of its position.

Bakunin is seen at his best in attacking this view. "*They say that this State yoke—the dictatorship—is a necessary transitional means in order to attain the emancipation of the people: Anarchism or freedom is the goal, the State or dictatorship is the means. Thus to free the working masses it is first necessary to enslave them.*" The State, so Bakunin argued, is not a mere

instrument but an institution with its own rules of working. It is impossible to capture an institution and force it to go your own way, it has an influence which cannot be nullified by the policies of those working within it. Kropotkin, talking of "*sincere Republicans*" who want to utilise the organisation that already exists, made the same point: "*And for not having understood that you cannot make an historical institution go in any direction you would have it, that it must go its own way, they were swallowed up by the institution.*" As for this dictatorship being "representative" and "transitional", Bakunin scornfully rejected this as totally unrealistic. "*Thus, from whatever angle we approach the problem, we arrive at the same sorry result: the rule of great masses of people by a small privileged minority. But, the Marxists say, this minority will consist of workers. Yes, indeed, of* ex-workers, *who, once they become rulers or representatives of the people, cease to be workers and begin to look down upon the toiling masses. From that time on they represent not the people but themselves and their own claims to govern the people. Those who doubt this know precious little about human nature.*" State-socialism, to Bakunin, was "freedom" imposed on people and this he regarded as a nonsensical contradiction. The history of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia is a thorough verification of his views on Communism. He had foreseen the mutations of a revolution led by an elite, predicting in particular the change from the anti-State character of the revolution in its early spontaneous phase to the conservative, power-seeking nature of the established Soviet government.

As against the political revolution of the Marxists (which virtually amounts to the replacement of one set of rulers by another, together with a change in the slogans of the governing ideology) anarchists advocated a "social revolution" meaning a change from one form of social organisation to another. The difference between a social revolution as seen by anarchists, and any other revolution lies in this: that the social revolutionary objective is not the capturing but the destruction of the State-machinery and, consequently, the elimination of power relationships from society. This follows from the anarchist doctrine that the State signifies not merely the existence of power placed above the subjects but includes a whole set of relationships between members of society. The State on this view is a centralised institution which claims competence to interfere with independent sections of society; it lays down and

enforces rules in a number of fields and in this way conducts affairs affecting people—nominally in their interests, in fact, as often as not, against their interests. The continual extension of the areas of State operation, already a feature of nineteenth century Europe, was seen by anarchists as a danger to freedom and consequently as something to be opposed.

Anarchists recognised that even groups which are interested in capturing power *for the sake of* bringing about freedom, notwithstanding the sincerity of the individuals concerned simply never get past the first objective. Therefore, the problem as it appeared to them, was always one of "how to achieve freedom" and never one of "how to capture power". But the view they held about their prospects was an optimistic one, to say the least. Clearly, there can be no talk of "achieving freedom" until we have dealt with the question of whether social changes of the kind envisaged by the anarchists can be accomplished at all. Already Proudhon saw that there was a problem here for him. After rejecting the notion that governments can bring about social revolutions (governments are by nature conservative and interested in upholding the *status quo*) he fell back on "*society itself*" accomplishing the change. "*Society itself*" meant to Proudhon "*the masses when permeated by intelligence*", and he said that the revolution will take place "*through the unanimous agreement of the citizens, through the experience of the workmen and through the progress and growth of enlightenment*". Later anarchists had a not dissimilar solution to offer: "*Revolutionary collectivists,*" wrote Bakunin, "*try to diffuse science and knowledge among the people, so that the various groups of human society, when convinced by propaganda, may organise and combine into federations, in accordance with their natural tendencies and their real interests.*".

Kropotkin's work was almost entirely devoted to proving that man is by nature co-operative and altruistic and that the non-co-operative, aggressive tendencies in people are the result of the authoritarian social environment in which they live. According to him, anarchist propaganda works on these latent co-operative tendencies and, by kindling them, brings about the social revolution. This simple-minded faith in "the natural genius of the people" has survived into our modern world. George Woodcock, a contemporary follower of Kropotkin, in criticising the "pessimism" of Burnham, has this to say: "*Where, however, Burnham and many others of his kind differ from*

Kropotkin and the anarchists is in their pessimistic acceptance of the inevitability of the triumph of the State in its extreme form. The determinism that dominates their idea is, indeed, hardly tenable on any grounds of logic or social experience. Nothing is inevitable in society, either managerial revolution or social revolution. Only tendencies can be described, and the tendency towards the social revolution is just as much alive to-day, if less apparent, as that towards the final consummation of the State." Woodcock argues that while the State has made enormous progress, the continued existence of society in its present form depends on the co-operation of the workers, and therefore the real power lies in their hands. "*The consolidation of the State and the social death that will follow thereon will never be completed if the workers once become aware of their power and kill the State by the paralysis of direct economic action.*"

Behind these theories about the coming of the social revolution lie certain assumptions about the working of society. In the case of Proudhon's naive statement it is easiest to see what is being assumed: a unanimous agreement among citizens, and the power of education or propaganda to change people's beliefs and objectives. Such unanimous agreement is clearly impossible if people are in conflict on various demands, and, equally, the most powerful propaganda is doomed to failure where it goes against vested interests. This obvious truth about society was not completely ignored by anarchists. In criticising Fourier, Bakunin calls it an error to believe that peaceful persuasion and propaganda will "*touch the hearts of the rich to such an extent that the latter would come themselves and lay down the surpluses of their riches at the doors of their phalansteries.*" It seems then that even the theory of class struggle held by anarchists contradicted their solidarist beliefs. In this vein Peter Kropotkin talked about the two currents of history: "*Throughout the history of our civilisation, two traditions, two opposed tendencies, have been in conflict: the Roman tradition and the popular tradition, the imperial tradition and the federalist tradition, the authoritarian tradition and the libertarian tradition*". So that even anarchists had to admit that solidarity of entire societies is a fiction. However, apart from the rulers who would not be interested in freedom, there is the large mass of oppressed, the workers, to whom anarchist theory was supposed to apply. But the working class itself displays no solidarity

in support of any one cause, and anarchists, to uphold the view that a revolution from below is possible, had to fall back on the quite implausible theory of "real interests"—of underlying, non-apparent solidarity. Thus when Bakunin came to criticise the German socialists he explained the fact that German workers in general have no anarchist leanings by blaming Lassalle and Marx for misleading the German proletariat. This argument is very unconvincing. By the same reasoning it could be made out that Italian or Spanish anarchists were, underneath, "really" Marxists misled by Bakunin's glibness.

Equally unsuccessful are Kropotkin's efforts to show that the co-operative tendencies in workers, or any other tendencies held to be favourable to the spread of anarchy, are more real or more fundamental than those admittedly existing trends which are unfree, or which make for conflict. We could here object to the "psychologising" of social phenomena implied by the talk about tendencies in individuals favoured by Kropotkin. But a more important point about the view that the workers have a "natural tendency" to anarchism or that it is in their "real interests" is that we cannot empirically distinguish natural tendencies from others we could call unnatural. Woodcock's argument is open to the same objection: the tendency towards the social revolution is not apparent because it consists of something the workers are supposed to have but do not in fact have—an interest in the general strike. In a realistic moment Bakunin himself admitted this on talking in detail about the working class. He found that there is a labour aristocracy of more developed, literate individuals, as well as an unconscious mass of workers. He found that artisans such as, for instance, blacksmiths show signs of revolutionary instincts while others, mainly better paid craftsmen, have distinctly bourgeois ambitions and outlook. Among joiners, printers, tailors, he found, as a consequence of the degree of education and special knowledge required for these trades, more conscious thinking but also more bourgeois smugness; while, to instance a final example, he noted that those who are thoroughly imbued with a revolutionary spirit are in a minority and comprise what he called a "*revolutionary vanguard*". Observations of this kind, noting the variety of ways and directions in which workers are motivated, contrast sharply

repression. That suggests as its consequence a civilisation of neurotics, a matter which has been considered above. (We can note in this connection that Freud himself, whilst contending for the existence of sublimation, decided that it was no substitute for actual sexual satisfaction.)

Politically, the subordination of sexual enjoyment to reproduction and the application of the conception of sin to its independent pursuit, are bound up with the maintenance of the authoritarian state. The encouragement of guilt feelings in regard to sexuality, and the attempted enforcement of compulsive monogamy, assist the application of the notion of guilt to *political* unorthodoxy, to the disregard of the compulsive demands of the state and the church. Sexual docility goes along with docility to other kinds of authority and sexual repression may be a condition of social and political servility in general. Reference should be made here to the relative sexual freedom which existed in Russia early in the revolution, and the later growth of sexual repression as the Soviet society became more-and-more oppressed politically.

Something of the utopian social reformer comes out in Reich when he goes on to postulate a society which is sexually free and does not involve the frustration of ordinary sexuality. He speaks, at times, as if a social movement *could* succeed in replacing "the sex-negation of to-day by general sex-affirmation (with all its economic prerequisites)". Much of Reich's argument in this connection depends on his distinction between "natural biological impulses" and "secondary anti-social impulses". This distinction is defensible to some extent since it is taken to distinguish those impulses, which are primary in the sense that they could biologically be expected from those impulses which are developed when *social* pressures prevent the primary impulses from expressing themselves. But it could still be challenged on the ground that it involves a use of "natural" over and above "occurrence" and, since demands of various origins will interact with one another and impinge upon one another, we could never be sure, while social pressures continue, of the precise nature of the primary impulses. We could never be sure, in particular, that they were never "anti-social". Thus while Reich avoids some of the more obvious objections to a programme of sexual reform, realising what would be involved in such a programme, he yet fails to see (or at least does not make clear) that there are interests in society which, like genital impulses, just cannot be abolished.

The advocate of sexual freedom is aware of the existence

of competing moralities (a conception, incidentally, which is foreign to his opponents, whose case would be considerably weakened by the admission that they were speaking, not in the name of morality, but only in the name of *a* morality). But this does not mean that he regards free love itself as a morality which he is prescribing for society, or which he is attempting to impose upon it. There is no question of eliminating either repressed sexuality or sexual moralism from society—to suppose this is to involve oneself in the very type of solidarist view of society which is being opposed.

In line with the general policy of upholding freedom by criticising and opposing authoritarian features of society whenever and wherever they are found, advocacy of sexual freedom is a means of protest against one kind of repressive morality. It especially involves an exposure of the ideology of chastity together with its companion ideologies, e.g., those of compulsive monogamy and of the authoritarian family. Free love, then, exists in conflict with the prevailing conventional morality and *not in place of it.* It can be characterised first-and-foremost by the absence of sexual guilt-feelings and by the openness of its struggle with morality. What is involved is the rejection of furtiveness in sexual practices and of the suggestion of anything dirty about sex. Free love is not a simple question of the number of times one engages in coitus as some would have us believe. On the contrary, it has to be stressed that sexual acts (including full coitus) which are performed in circumstances that render them contrary to part of the moral code are by no means rare. But by no stretch of the imagination could much of this activity be regarded as evidence of sexual freedom.

One of the most dangerous fallacies of the conventional moralists is the reduction of sex to coitus. In connection with putting forward the view that sexual freedom is correlated with cultural and artistic expression and that where you find sexual repression there you will not find great art, Bertrand Russell makes the following comment: "Let me not be told that someone has collected statistics of the number of sexual acts per day performed in the United States, and that it is as least as great per head as in any other country. I do not know whether this is the case or not, and I am not in any way concerned to deny it". In this connection we would in any case want to make a distinction within the class of technically successful sexual relations, between those which involve adequate orgastic satis-

forced by the recognition of facts. Kropotkin's two currents of history is expressed in this way: "*Between these two currents, always alive, struggling in humanity—the current of the people and the current of the minorities which thirst for political and religious domination—our choice is made*". Here is a passage illuminated by a different conception of freedom, as something which is always alive and struggling within society against authoritarian tendencies which are every bit as genuine as what is opposed to them. Anarchism, in this untypical excerpt, is a support of freedom which is one thing alone with other causes that can be supported or opposed. The coming or not coming of the social revolution recedes in importance, since freedom and authority are always struggling, and the chief issue becomes one of immediate opposition to the State. Contradicting a great deal of his utopianism Bakunin himself, echoing Marx, once said that "*to think of the future is criminal*". Malatesta, on occasions, also emphasised the anarchist concern with opposing presently existing, established authorities: "*How will society be organised? We do not and we cannot know. No doubt, we too have busied ourselves with projects of social reorganisation, but we attach to them only a very relative importance. They are bound to be wrong perhaps entirely fantastic.*"

It appears that not all anarchist thought was cast in a utopian mould. The statements quoted indicate, I think, an advance in realism. Along this line we can take freedom as a character, not of societies as a whole but of certain groups, institutions and people's ways of life within any society, and even then not as their exclusive character. Equally, on this view, piecemeal freedoms will always meet with opposition and those who are caught up in them will resist conformist pressures. The "*permanent protest*" implied by this is carried on without the promise of final triumph but in a spirit of "*distrusting your masters and distrusting your emancipators*", and with no intention of wanting to make the world safe for freedom. This security seeking ideal, or some variant of it, is the aim of the modern socialist movement, but it involves it in trying to capture power for the sake of enforcing its demands on the rest of society, thereby leading to the very authoritarianism that revolutionaries have ostensibly renounced. As against this way of proceeding non-utopian anarchism has to be described as futile. The futility consists not in being a failure at revolutionary politics but in refusing to deal in terms of success or failure; in not attempting

to carry out, or even propose, wide, all-embracing policies that bear on the whole of society and are meant to further *the* final revolution. Only in this way can one hope to avoid that illusory optimism which claims as its victims all those who try to engage mass support of workers, or who try to persuade quantities of people whose interest in anarchy is negligible.

There is considerable agreement between a position of permanent protest (such as the one formulated by Max Nomad) and what nineteenth century anarchists had to say. I am thinking especially of their attacks on the State, on the Church and other authoritarian institutions; their criticisms of the security-craving ideals of the bourgeoisie and of the workers who caught it from them; of the domineering relationships which characterise economic life; of the authoritarian ideology of Marxism and of the compromising stand of reformists, etc. But where upholders of permanent protest would part from old-fashioned anarchists is over the contention that in all this there is something that will lead to a social revolution and a rosy, free state of future society. Freedom has always had a hard road to tread, as the biography of any anarchist will amply prove, and nothing that anarchists ever said has succeeded in making the idea of freedom flourishing in safety and security in any way less implausible than it is. But some of the things they have said indicate, as I have tried to show, that the contest between freedom and authority is the permanent order of the day. Doing politics, advancing freedom as a programme for the entire human race, cannot change this; it can only foster illusions about the way society runs.

THE ILLUSIONS OF MORALISM

By A. J. Baker

Discussions of moral or ethical concepts can involve a number of things, such as an investigation of the exact way in which moral words are used, how they are related to each other and to non-moral uses, and how they vary from group to group. This paper, however, deals with prevalent moral *justifications* and with the social role of moralism, and is intended to give an outline account of the illusions which lie behind everyday moral pronouncements.

The moralism prevalent in our society can be most simply indicated by thinking of those people who seek to enforce or prescribe certain types of conduct in the name of "good", "right", "what is in the best interests of the community", and so on; and who, at the same time, want to repress or proscribe other types of conduct on the ground that it is "bad", "wrong", "immoral", "anti-social", and so on. What types of activity are advanced or opposed are less important here than the desire for enforcement and repression; the latter are marks of the moralist outlook. That outlook is, of course, found most commonly and most crudely in the pronouncements of religious spokesmen, especially on sexual conduct—as when they seek to promote chastity, or uphold the sanctity of marriage. But it is not confined to religious spokesmen, or to sexual matters. Policemen, magistrates and lawyers in the course of their work, spokesmen for censorship, educators extolling the virtues of citizenship and patriotism, or, again, newspaper editorials and almost any speech of a politician on, say, the merits of the United Nations—all these give examples of overt or covert moralism.

Practising moralists of these kinds, as well as people in everyday life, usually make little attempt to give reasons for their moral pronouncements. They just speak in the name of an assumed set of moral truths. In fact, that is one of the main difficulties in exposing moralism; from environment and teaching we inherit a set of unexamined moral assumptions, which we are made to feel are axiomatically true. If, however,

we do try to examine these assumptions we find that, when a defence is offered at all, it is made by appealing to the traditional reasons or justifications of religious leaders and other moralist spokesmen.

Thus, suppose we do ask for a justification of a moral pronouncement. Justifications which satisfy the moralist will in every case take the form of referring us to some ultimate moral authority or sanction which upholds the pronouncement in question. The history of moral philosophy is mainly the history of appeals to different moral sanctions, but I want to begin with the simplest case of all, that of the appeal to God—for this is truly a paradigm case, it provides a model for all the more complex or more sophisticated moral justifications. So, take the view that we must obey the Ten Commandments because God commands us to do so. Considered fully, we could reject this view by pointing out the illogical character of the "proofs" of God's existence, and of the whole conception of a supernatural being. But this would be a side point. The important point is that even if we assumed for the sake of argument that it made sense to speak of an existing God, this would not provide the required moral justification. To be told "God commands us to obey the Ten Commandments" gives no moral explanation of why we *should* do what God commands. The position is exactly the same as with commands that may be given in everyday life; we are just told we must do such and such, and a moral reason for obeying has not been given. And if it is said that God is so powerful that we cannot or dare not disobey him, we have (as sometimes with everyday orders) simply a case of coercion. God is now treated as an all-powerful policeman who by force or threats tries to intimidate us into doing what he wants. In this case the moral appeal to God turns out merely to be an appeal to a pure authoritarian—which is something we can indicate by saying, in the spirit of Bakunin, "If God did exist, it would be necessary to oppose him".

Many moral apologists, including theologians, appear to have recognised part of the criticism just made, and that is why they have usually tried to find a moral sanction different from God's commands. In effect, they have seen through saying "Right actions are right because God commands them" and want to say instead "God commands them because they are right", so that a new account of right is required. But although

more complicated sanctions are usually offered, it is only their complication which makes them more plausible; logically, they are in the same position as the simple appeal to God.

Thus, appeal is often made to our "Duty", "Conscience" or "Moral Sense", which are said to tell us what we ought to do (for instance, that we ought to do what God commands). Again as a side point, we could object here to the theory of mind implied, and could argue that mental agencies such as Duty, Conscience or Moral Sense are fictitious entities (unless, indeed, they are connected with an empirical Freudian account of the super-ego, in which case their non-moral character is apparent). But the main point is that instead of an external policeman or censor, God, we now have an internal policeman or censor, such as Duty. And again no moral reason has been given for obeying the commands in question, for while it will be said they are "morally obligatory", this is just another way of saying "they must be obeyed". This is all the more evident when we remember that the main point of referring to Duty is to enforce its demands as against those of what is called "Inclination". We have the position: Duty or our Moral Sense tells us to do X, and Inclination or our Immoral Sense tells us to do Y; but it has not been shown why we *ought* to do X rather than Y. Of course, we may be told that it is axiomatic that we ought to do what Duty says, that this is what Duty means. Taken seriously this begs the question, for "We ought to obey Duty" becomes "We ought to obey that which ought to be obeyed". Otherwise, what it comes to in practical situations is that some professional moralist Z commands us to obey the commands of Duty, and no reason has been given to show why we must obey the commands of Z.

The view I am presenting is thus that the quest for a moral sanction, for an absolute ought, never gets beyond the disguised expression of simple commands. To this the reply may be made that the word "ought" regularly occurs in everyday life and that we can all distinguish between orders like "Close the door", "Put out that cigarette", and more binding exhortations of the form "You ought to do such and such". However, when we examine these uses of "ought" we find they work in the following way: Suppose someone says, "You ought to change your golf-grip"; it is clear that there are certain assumptions made which can be expressed by saying more fully "If you

want to improve your golf (and presumably you do) you ought to change your golf-grip". Similarly, if it is said "You ought to be more careful discussing politics in front of the manager", what is meant is "If you want to get on in your job you ought to be more careful . . . ". In these cases, if a man accepts the statement as true and has the wishes and interests assumed, there is a sense in which the "ought" may be said to apply to him. But it does not apply to a man with different wishes and interests—a man might not worry about improving his golf or getting on in his job. Now the moralist would be in the same position if he were prepared to express his "oughts" like this: "If you want to please God you ought to obey his commands", "If you want to conform to social pressures you ought to do what prevailing moralists tell you to do". But the moralist, of course, is not content with this because it is left open for people not to want to please God or to conform to social pressures. The moralist wants to find a sanction which will allow him to say that people of all sorts, including those with wishes and interests opposed to his own, ought to have his wishes and interests and ought to do what he says; and this is why he tries to disguise his commands as absolute moral obligations.

Another type of moral justification which nowadays is particularly influential depends on appeals to what can be labelled "the common good". This is the kind of appeal made in the name of "the moral standards of society", "the welfare of the community", "natural rights" and so on—compare such statements as "We cannot over-estimate the damage that will be done to society if people are allowed to read obscene publications of this kind" or "The spread of birth control and abortion is contrary to the best interests of Australia". The appeal to the common good can be attacked in the same way as previous appeals, i.e., on the ground that there is no such thing as the common good, and that even if there were it would not provide the required moral sanction, for suppose the common good requires that we do X, no reason has been given to show that we must do what it requires. However, there is the difference that whereas the existence of God or Duty can be treated as a side issue, the existence of the common good is here an important issue. It is easy to see that even people metaphysically-minded enough to accept the existence of entities like God and Duty have to treat them as simply expressing particular social commands. But it is more difficult to see

through the common good in the same way. Suppose, parallel to the statements above, we have "If you want to further the common good, work for the best interests of society, etc., you ought to do X". It may be felt that here there is not the same possibility of different interests that there is with golf, God or Duty; in other words, that it is more plausible to say that we all really want to further the common good. (Compare the beliefs of socialists and other social reformers.) Accordingly, I want to underline the fact that the common good is a phoney conception.

References to the common good appear plausible because, for instance, of the way people talk about *the* morality, or *the* moral standards, of society. But a little reflection reveals that what the *the* refers to are really the prevailing or dominating standards at a given time. A glance at history, or anthropology, or at our own contemporary society, shows that there are in society various different and often opposed groups, each making special moral demands on its own members and on society at large. Of course, these groups are not of the same strength, and that is why the moral demands of the most powerful groups come to be identified with those of society. This is also shown by the way in which the competition between different moral demands may result in a different social balance or compromise at different times and places—as an obvious example, consider authoritarian sexual morality; this has been more and less powerful at different periods in history, and also varies in different places to-day.

At any rate, it is this diversity of social habits and interests, and consequently of moral demands, that undermines the moralist's case. His assumed social theory is that there is a single, indivisible thing, society, with a single set of interests, and to this he adds the moral theory that these interests are moral interests. But neither theory will bear examination. For (1) if there were a single set of interests of society, what was good or moral about them would not have been shown (cf., if all men wanted to be healthy at all costs this would be a social, not a moral, fact); and (2) the monistic theory of society is falsified by the diversity of groups and interests, and, indeed, by the diversity of moralists. This is further revealed by the fact that appeals to the common good are usually made precisely in those cases where there is manifest diversity and opposition. For example, suppose there is a dispute about whether birth control information should be allowed to be widely adver-

tised; it is just then that moralists will talk about "the needs of society," "the best interests of Australia," etc., that is, at a time when the existence of controversy and opposition shows that there is not the identity of interests assumed. In other words, the function of the slogan, "the common good," and its synonyms is to conceal the fact that there is opposition and to advance the special interests of the group using the slogan.

The last point illustrates the social role of moralism generally, viz., to assist in the illusory and unconscious objectification of social demands. There are in society various groups which want to make various specific demands and exhortations—that all people are, or are to be made, to act in certain ways, to have access only to prescribed books and films, to avoid obscenity, to be socially adjusted, and so on. Behind every moral pronouncement lie real commands, demands or preferences of these and other kinds. The social facts are that Group A is interested in promoting X and wants to persuade or coerce other people into doing or supporting X, Group B wants to promote Y, and so on. But moralists rarely state their demands in this open way. Instead, their real but special demands are concealed by a process of rationalisation or objectification; the quite straightforward statement, "Group A wants X," is turned into a spurious appeal to a moral sanction: "X is good, or morally obligatory, or in the true interests of society."

The question may be asked: Why does this illusory process of objectification occur, why does the appeal to moral sanctions, like other forms of ideology, have such a vital role in society? The answer turns on two main reasons. (1) It is just sound politics. If the moralist did not use words like "good" and "right," but stated his demands in an open, undistorted way, he would weaken his influence in society. As a simple example, consider sexual moralism. If instead of talking about "the good life," "moral health," "purity," etc., moralists merely made straightforward demands that people restrict themselves to marital procreation, the fact that they spoke in their own name and not the name of society would be obvious, and they would not be nearly so effective in inducing frustration and feelings of guilt about sex. More sophisticated examples are provided by descriptions of certain things as "natural rights," or as "good," for this way of talking gains the political advantage of suggesting that there is something odd or absurd about anyone who is opposed to good or to a natural right. However, it is

not just a matter of successful politics, or of conscious planning on the part of moralists. There is (2) the psychology of moralists themselves, the fact that they are on the whole taken in by their own moral ideology. A full explanation of this would involve Freudian psychology and detailed social theory, but what I am referring to is the fact that the process of illusory objectification is largely an unconscious one. As pointed out above, the political function of moral slogans is to camouflage special interests, which are being promoted in opposition to other special interests. But this is not only concealed from the people whose support is enlisted, it is also concealed from the moralists themselves. If we continue with the example of sexual guilts, sexual moralists and censors are themselves very often people who feel guilty and repressed about sex; there is a sense in which their moral taboos represent an unconscious attempt to project on to other people their own guilts and repressions. Likewise, with less crude cases, the tenacity with which moral illusions are cherished is connected with the urge to identify personal wishes and interests with those of the world, and to seek to make the world conform, if not in social reality, at least in moral phantasy—all of which, incidentally, indicates an important reason why it would be utopian to expect any widespread disappearance of moralism.

The situation is thus that moral standards or values are not absolute or objective, they are relative to the particular interests and preferences of particular groups in society. It follows that the interests and preferences of groups opposed to moral illusions are not in a privileged position; they also are particular interests and preferences. Take, for instance, libertarian views and activities in past and present society, and the interests and preferences associated with them; they are no more "good," "natural," "in the interests of society," or "what ought to be pursued," than any other special social interests. Whether people accept these or other interests, including moralists' interests, depends on the interplay of social forces. There is, however, one important way in which (apart from the different interests they have) opponents of moral illusions clearly differ from moralistic groups. The latter, whether groups whose aims are obviously repressive, or reformist groups which seek to improve society as a whole, are impelled in an authoritarian direction; their desire to have their own interests over-ride all other inter-

ests leads them to make use both of overt authoritarianism and of the covert authoritarianism of moral justification. On the other hand, opponents of moralism try to defend and forward their interests in an open and unauthoritarian way. They express and exhibit their interests and preferences, and thus may persuade or influence other people in the same direction by enabling them to find these interests in themselves. But (in so far as they do escape moral illusions) they do not seek to impose their wishes on other people by cajolery or coercion; for, amongst the particular things they stand for, is precisely opposition to moral ideology and authoritarianism.

One of the reasons why I am out of employment now, why I have been out of employment for years, is simply that I have other ideas than the gentlemen who give the places to men who think as they do.

—VINCENT VAN GOGH.
Letter to Theo van Gogh, July, 1880.

The Ideology Of Chastity

By Ray Pinkerton

The sexual instinct in man is more constant, and probably more strongly developed, than in most other animals. Yet despite his more intensive sexuality man's sexual life is distorted, repressed and frustrated to an extent found in no other form of animal life. It has at all times been subject to sexual taboos, though their nature has varied considerably from age to age, and from society to society. In modern western society, sexual acts are on principle deemed illegitimate, if not illegal, when they do not conform to certain prescriptions set forth and supported by the current legal system, or the prevailing sexual morality. Against this morality there is some discontent, but little protest: dissimulation and pretence, no less than suppression and control, are characteristic features of reactionary society with its authoritarian guardians.

The ubiquitous nature of sex ensures the ambivalence of the moralistic mentality. Thus the most prominent feature of conventional morality is its "polarity", its double codes, and its inosculation with all forms of social servility and quietism. Fear of sexuality carries over into fear of social disorder, and not merely sexual repression but also sexual hypocrisy are central features of this system.

While genital demands may be repressed, they cannot be abolished, and their repression will create conditions which, like the conditions of orgastic potency itself, the moralist sees as dirty, undesirable and immoral. The consequent double standards, however, though not intended, are an inevitable part of the sexual regime of conventional morality. The lip-service to a Christian ethic of extra-marital chastity and marital fidelity goes along with prostitution, adultery, rape, onanism, masturbation, sexual indulgence generally. What we do ourselves is "gallantry", what others do is "fornication"; what men do and what women do are the subject of practical moral evaluation according to two different sets of criteria.

Wilhelm Reich, in *The Sexual Revolution*, brings out the inseparability of such practices as adultery and prostitution from conventional morality with its dogmas of monogamous marriage and female chastity. "Adultery and prostitution are

part and parcel of the double sexual morality which allows to a man, in marriage as well as before, what the woman, for economic reasons, must be denied. Due to the natural demands of sexuality, however, a strict sexual morality results in exactly the opposite of that which is intended. Immorality in the reactionary sense, that is, adultery and extra-marital sex relations, grow into grotesque social phenomena: sexual perversion on the one hand, and mercenary sexuality, inside and outside of marriage, on the other." In connection with this typical, but sometimes unrecognised, emphasis on mercinariness it is interesting to note the association in so-called "prostitution fantasies" (common to all women) of prostitution with a wish to copulate with more than one man; and the demand, incorporated in the law, that a married woman should (or must) copulate with one man even if no mutual affection exists.

One could multiply, virtually without end, the manifestations of sexual morality's double standards—inconsistencies, contradictions, hypocrisies—in social life. To mention but a few examples: people repeatedly hide themselves to perform sexual acts which they are ashamed to admit to in public, which they flatly deny if put to the test; parents condemn their children for doing the very things they themselves took delight in doing in their own youth; judges lecture calmly to people whose actions are similar to what they themselves do in privacy; priests in the confessional complacently treat all admissions of sexual activity as admissions of "sins". Children have lessons on plant fertilisation and propagation, but it is rare for them to be taught the same functions in animals. Pictures and statues may depict the nude human body, but to depict the pubic hair is, as D. H. Lawrence discovered, considered offensive and indecent. Women are encouraged to be highly conscious and proud of their "charms" (notably the sexual organs), yet to exhibit these in public would be to invite charges of obscenity and of exposure. Sexual moralism is incorporated even in language: the technical name for the genital organs in both sexes is the "pudenda", a word derived from the Latin *pudere*, "to be ashamed".

Examples of this type illustrate the secretiveness and guilt which have been appended to sex. They show the exponents of morality weighed down by their own respectability with its shackles of innocence and its guilt feelings. The very thought of others attempting to free themselves from such accretions is very often intolerable to the sexual moralist, who in emphasising such accretions unwittingly reveals a distortion or at best

a disguise, of his own sexuality. A clear-cut illustration of sexual distortion leading to such behaviour is provided by the rather extreme case of a Frenchman, the Duc de la Meilleraye, who, in the reign of Louis XIV, set about mutilating the statues in the Palais Mazarin. These works were, according to him, indecent. He further forbade women and girls to milk the cows on his estates, for "they must be preserved from the bad thoughts such an occupation might give rise to". It is to be recorded that Meilleraye ended his days as a lunatic, believing himself to be a tulip.

The presence of guilt feelings is one feature of repressed sexuality. Some writers have contended, although the evidence is far from conclusive, that we may also expect to find some atrophy of the genital organs in those people deprived of regular sexual relations. Rene Guyon, for example, in his *Sexual Freedom* suggests that copious sexual enjoyment tends to keep the genital organs active and vigorous until life is far advanced, this being the logical counterpart of the atrophy which, he says, is often found in abstainers. In this connection he notes the report of Sulpicius that in St. Martin, famous for his privations and macerations (devoutly styled "austerities"), the penis was found after death "to be so much shrunken that the organ would never have been detected, had not the observers known where to look for it."

Another feature of sexual morality, on the psychological side, is the part it plays in the formation of neuroses. We find Freud, in " 'Civilised' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness" (1908), asking the question whether modern sexual morality is worth the neuroses it imposes on so many members of society. Freud here raises issues which were later taken up by Reich, who devoted a great deal of his labour to emphasising the importance of genital sexuality for the understanding of neuroses. In this article Freud already argues that the capacity for sublimation of the sexual instinct is limited, and that "a certain degree of direct sexual satisfaction appears to be absolutely necessary for by far the greater number of natures, and frustration of this variable individual need is avenged by manifestations which on account of their injurious effect on functional activity and of their subjectively painful character, we must regard as illness". In a society which taboos every sexual activity other than that in legitimate matrimony, perversion, or

at least an inhibition of genital sexual life (resulting from an infantile fixation on a preliminary sexual aim) and neurosis, in which the perverse tendencies come to expression from the unconscious part of the mind, will be the result for a great many more people. Moral standards and "the arduous task of abstinence" together "make avoidance of the genital union of the sexes the main point of abstinence, whilst favouring other forms of sexual activity"—in particular, of course, onanism and masturbation. Such activities contribute to frigidity and impotence, just as the attempted suppression of the sexual instinct does, especially in the family and as a result of education (more particularly in regard to the sensuality of the girl, for whose suppression "the most drastic measures" are employed). "All those men", writes Freud, "whose libido, as a result of masturbatory and perverse sexual practices, has become habituated to situations and conditions of satisfaction other than the normal develop in marriage a diminished potency. And all those women who could preserve their virginity only by similar means show themselves anaesthetic to normal intercourse in marriage."

Reich's "orgasm theory" is a development, and, in some respects, a criticism of Freud's early theory of neurosis. In *The Function of the Orgasm* Reich argued that in the case of neuroses generally "the neurosis is not merely the result of a *sexual* disturbance in the broader sense of Freud; it is rather the result of a *genital* disturbance in the strict sense of orgastic impotence". Criticising the assumption of Freud that there can be a renunciation or rejection of sexuality in general, Reich pointed out that "perverse and neurotic modes of gratification" are substituted for genital satisfaction and occur only when the latter is disturbed or made impossible. Subsequently he adduced much evidence for the existence in society of such "pathological behaviour": "general sexual inhibition; the compulsive character of the moral demands; the inability to conceive of the compatibility of sexual gratification and achievement in work; the peculiar belief that the sexuality of children and adolescents is a pathological aberration; the inability to think of any other form of sexuality than lifelong monogamy; the lack of confidence in one's own strength and judgment, with a consequent longing for an omniscient guiding father-figure, etc.", these being traits with which he was already well-acquainted from clinical experience.

The moralist, by misinterpretation of such behaviour, regards it as evidence for the existence of a large number of instinctive elements to be "safeguarded" by his own brand of morality. A consideration of anthropological facts would run counter to such a conclusion; but the main point would still be the logical one that given *any* number of instinctive elements, we would still have no support for our *moral* prohibitions. That such characteristics, however, as possessive jealousy, the esteem for chastity, sexual modesty, and so-called romantic love, have been gradually built up as secondary characteristics under the influence of definite social conditions, is indicated by comparative study of societies. We find, for example, such practices as polygamy and polyandry; infanticide; the official (and sometimes public) deflowering of virgins by priests; and the notion that one of the duties of hospitality consists in providing with a sexual companion a guest whom the host wishes particularly to honour. This last custom was observed among the Brule Sioux, and Muller-Lyer tells the illuminating story of a civilian doctor, with a very attractive wife, who availed himself of this hospitality at the home of Chief Spotted Tail, but was later "not a little put out when the Chief one evening requested the same favour from him". In western society we have the odd behaviour of those men who are willing to marry widows or divorced women, but not women who have engaged in sexual intercourse outside marriage. So much for the instinctive character of the ethics of chastity.

The appeal to instincts, in fact is spurious because the "protectors" of so-called instinctive demands are not *merely* falsifying the facts, but, in attempting to abolish what arises in the nature of the case, are showing that they have special interests in the matter themselves, that their "protection" embodies repression and exploitation and cloaks the real issue which is one of ideology, in particular, the ideology of compulsive monogamy.

In western civilisation property morality has been employed to enforce wifely chastity, and accounts for the practical distinction between what is right for women and what is right for men, as well as for the almost general ideology that the man has to seduce a woman, while a woman is not supposed to seduce a man. In discussing the origin of customs of repression leading to chastity, Ernest Crawley in *Studies of Savages*

and Sex pays attention to the extension of marriage law. He cites a number of cases where "chastity begins with marriage" and distinguishes three more-or-less universal cases, namely, "the prohibition of loss of virginity in purchasable daughters, the prohibition of infringement of the husband's proprietary rights in a wife, and the belief in the 'injury', more-or-less mysterious in its origin and content, resulting from intercourse between members of the same family". It seems likely, as Crawley suggests, that control over the sexual life of pubescent youth originated directly from the adult men, who wished to safeguard their own privileges as husbands. The more obvious explanation of the fact that in certain societies sexual control *commences* with puberty, namely, that the rules were made so as to prevent pregnancy among the young girls, is ruled out by the evidence that when such rules were first instituted the knowledge that sexual intercourse is necessary for conception had not been obtained. Later on, of course, the question of property becomes bound up with that of blood relationship and in western civilisation, as Bertrand Russell points out, "the primary motive of sexual ethics . . . has been to secure that degree of female virtue without which the patriarchal family becomes impossible, since paternity is uncertain." The interest, then, in the chastity of the woman is an immediate result of economic interests. Thus, as Reich says, "through the coupling of the inheritance laws with procreation, the problem of marriage and the problem of sexuality have almost become one; the sexual union of two people is no longer a matter of sexuality".

The frustration of sexual impulses in general is a condition of the continuance of authoritarian society. Two institutions, at least, of such a society serve as the "foremost breeding place of the ideological atmosphere of conservatism": the patriarchal family and monogamous marriage. Reich points out that the cardinal function of the family, "that for which it is mostly supported and defended by conservative science and law, is that of serving as a factory for authoritarian ideologies and conservative structures". As such it is a breeding place of ignorance and superstition. Its own mode of operation and its process of education—education in the most general sense—have the immediate result of leading the child to associate sexual matters with a sense of guilt and fear, an association which goes so deep as to become partly or wholly unconscious, and consequently to be of greater effect on later social behaviour. The family "forms an educational apparatus through which

practically every individual in our society, from the moment of drawing his first breath, has to pass. It influences the child in the sense of a reactionary ideology not only as an authoritarian institution, but also on the strength of its own structure; it is the conveyor-belt between the economic structure of conservative society and its ideological superstructure; its reactionary atmosphere must needs become inextricably implanted in every one of its members. Through its own form and through direct influencing, it conveys not only conservative ideologies and conservative attitudes toward the existing social order; in addition, on the basis of the sexual structure to which it owes its existence and which it procreates, it exerts an immediate influence on the sexual structure of the children".

It should be noted, in connection with the second of the main sexually repressive institutions of our society, that sexual freedom is opposed to the *compulsive* character of monogamous marriage, it is *not* opposed to the notion of the lasting sexual relationship. In other words, free love is distinct from mere promiscuity and does not necessarily involve *indiscriminate* copulation. Clinical experience, according to Reich, "shows beyond any doubt that those people who are incapable of establishing a lasting relationship are dominated by an infantile fixation . . . in other words, suffer from a sexual disorder. Either their strivings are anchored in some kind of homosexual attachment (typical, for example, in athletes, students and professional soldiers) or it is because a fantasy ideal makes any real sexual object seem worthless". On the other hand, of course, short-lived sexual relationships at a mature age are not of necessity neurotic, and it would be true to say that he or she who never had the courage or the strength to enter such a relationship was under the pressure of an irrational guilt feeling. A disadvantage of such "temporary" or promiscuous relationship is that it does not allow the same complete sexual adaptation between the partners and consequently not the same complete sexual gratification as the lasting sexual relationship. When we speak of a lasting relationship it is not necessary to specify any definite period of time and it is unimportant whether the relationship lasts weeks, months or years. Of course, this is not to say that the relationship must or should be monogamous, since the entire matter is not, from a non-moralistic point of view, one for prescription.

It has been argued that satisfactory sexuality is only possible where the jealousy which one normally feels does not turn into possessive demands, and where the desire for other partners is recognised as natural and matter-of-course. Nobody, says Reich, "would think of blaming anybody for not wanting to wear the same dress year in, year out, or for getting tired of eating the same food all the time. Only in the sexual realm has the exclusiveness of possession attained a great emotional significance; this, because the interlacing of economic interests and sexual relations made natural jealousy expand into the right of possession". Numerous examples "show clearly that an occasional relationship with another partner only help (an already existing) relationship which was on the point of taking on the form of compulsive marriage. In a permanent sexual relationship which is not economically bound there are two possible outcomes of this situation: either the relationship with the third person was only temporary—that proves it could not compete with the existing one; in that case the latter only becomes consolidated, the woman has lost the feeling of being inhibited or of being incapable of entering another relationship. Or the new relationship becomes more intensive than the old one, providing deeper pleasure and companionship; in this case the old relationship is dissolved".

One of the more sophisticated "defences" of sexual morality rests on the notion of sublimation of sexual energy and its supposed connection with cultural achievements. Many Freudians argued that civilisation depends to a large extent on a successful process of sublimation. Sexual suppression and instinctual renunciations are then said to be an indispensable factor in the cultural process. Against this Reich contended, in line with what we have said above, that "what is correct in this theory is only that sexual suppression forms the mass-psychological basis for a *certain* culture, namely, the *patriarchal authoritarian* one, in all its forms. What is incorrect is the formulation that sexual suppression is the basis of culture in general". In general neither the process of sublimation, nor even that of renunciation, is successful since "infantile and pathogenic desires" (e.g., sadistic and incestuous impulses) can only be overcome if genital demands are satisfied. The denial of genital, as distinct from pregential impulses will result not in their successful sublimation or renunciation but in their

with the talk about workers' solidarity favoured by socialists of every kind.

Connected with this solidarist view, which sometimes goes so far as to lead to a description of the free society as one from which all disagreements have vanished, is the view that freedom is something which affects society as a whole. Bakunin takes the line that equality and socialism are necessary conditions of freedom. "*The serious realisation of liberty will be impossible so long as the vast majority of the population remains dispossessed in points of elementary need.*" Accordingly, freedom means "freedom-for-all", and this is all that it means. The question raised by this way of talking is again whether the "*serious realisation of liberty*" is at all possible, whether freedom is something of which we can sensibly ask: is it realisable? It seems that if Bakunin was right we could not explain how the idea of freedom arose at all unless we postulate an original fully socialistic and egalitarian society, a sort of "condition of grace" from which subsequent human societies have fallen. Nor could we understand how the State encroaches on freedom unless we took the most illogical step of regarding it as standing *vis-a-vis* an already existing free society, attacking it from the outside. It is on this view hard to grasp how anarchists came to support freedom in the first place, and, in fact, we do find them sometimes talking in a way which denies that the attempts to dominate and rule over people arise out of genuine demands for power. When in this mood, anarchists ask us to regard the State as a "distortion", as a "horrible fiction" somehow not of the human world. But anarchists, of all people, cannot deny the unfictitious, matter of fact existence of authority and we find that it was in drawing attention to it that they have over-reached themselves and have put forward a doctrine on which freedom (except in the nebulous future) is impossible. As a consequence of this false theory of freedom anarchists were utopian in their political pronouncements. On their totalistic view of freedom as a state of society yet to come they could not accommodate in their thought those piecemeal activities and social forces struggling against authority which, in practice, they clearly recognised. Liberty is something not found at present, something that will "really" come only in the future: hence the utopian concern with the future of society.

There is a marked internal contradiction in anarchism

between the utopian social reformer's outlook and the clear-cut attack on authority which does not invoke the common good. Evidence of this is that no matter how pronounced their escapist preoccupations were anarchist thinkers never freed themselves from ambivalence when talking about the future. They recognised that "*to indoctrinate and dictate to the future*" is a form of authoritarianism, the more so since the social role of the picture of a happy future, in religion no less than in politics, is to cloak present demands which would not be as readily acceptable without the reference to the rewards of "kingdom come". One gains the impression that anarchists vaguely suspected the true function of utopian thought. In the case of their critique of socialism this is evident: they demonstrated that the socialist Utopia, the use of repressive institutions for the ending of repression, disguises an immediate demand for the leadership of the proletariat as a means of gaining power. Anarchists readily pointed out that it is a mistake to think that this sort of thing will lead to freedom. In spite of this, they commit a similar mistake in suggesting the final triumph of forces struggling for freedom. Bakunin's dictum "*Liberty is the goal of the historic progress of humanity*" fairly obviously involves the erroneous belief that there are special interests in politics—such as the interest in freedom or in gaining power—which can operate to the exclusion of all opposition. The point, expressed differently, amounts to this: Bakunin's claim that history is on the side of anarchism implies that some day some social changes will take place that will have as their effect the elimination of social struggle. This possibility is highly metaphysical and we can safely ignore —both in Marx and Bakunin—the notions of inevitability which they had learnt from Hegel. History is not on the side of the working class, nor is it on the side of the State, Prussian or Oceanian. The analogy with "*1984*" is apposite even though in its *content* the anarchist Utopia is the exact reverse of Orwell's "*world of victory after victory, triumph after triumph: an endless pressing, pressing, pressing upon the nerve of power*". But it resembles the latter very closely in treating a mythical striving for one-sided success as a possible historical development.

The ambivalence of anarchists comes out, among other instances, in the fact that they did not adhere rigidly to their conception of the State-society as completely unfree, and the State-less society as entirely free. As in the case of its complement, the unitary view of society, there are gaps in this theory

faction and those which do not. We can do so by contrasting physical impotence or frigidity on the one hand with "orgastic impotence" on the other, there being in the latter case a lack of capacity for full orgastic satisfaction, which is not necessarily accompanied by a disturbance of potency or the capacity for vaginal orgasm. This is significant because the features of orgastic impotence which Reich specifies e.g., sadistic fantasies, the special interest in seduction, or in potency (in the sense of how many times a night) would be typical of the repressed but not of the sexually free person.

The essential point, then, is that free love exists in opposition to the prevailing social demand that sexuality be frustrated and, as such, it is a species of *permanent protest.* Let us not be deceived into thinking that a realistic approach to sex (or to anything else), a concern merely with what is the case, will ever be a feature of society as such. But the recognition of the continuing existence of moral codes with their repression of sexuality is no reason for conforming to them, for acquiescence in sexual frustration.

As some philosophers attack metaphysical views, even though metaphysics outlives them, just so will the supporter of sexual freedom attack sexual ideologies, in particular the ideology of chastity, as the metaphysical expression of distorted sexuality.

Have you not in a chimney seen
A sullen faggot, wet and green,
How coyly it receive the heat
And at both ends does fume and sweat?

So fares it with the harmless ma'd
When first upon her back she's laid;
But the kind, experienced dame
Cracks, and rejoices in the flame.
—John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester

AN OPEN LETTER TO LIBERTARIANS

Your society claims to be a distinctive and critical body in the University, but in fact it does not differ very much from religious societies; for example, in common with those societies you have the outward appearance of discussion but no sort of criticism of categories or of leading views. In common with bodies such as the S.C.M., libertarianism is not based on any critical study, and, in particular, you share the uncritical notion that you have an open platform and views that anybody could take up.

Along with this goes the view that you have a set of beliefs which are combined with "practice", which view involves the confused notion that there can be an application of theory which would not itself be theory, and which may be said to have the "appearance", as against the "reality", of theory in these matters.

Like the linguistic philosophers with their notion that everyone can offer an opinion on every subject, that it is possible to have study without immersion in a certain tradition, in particular, without knowledge of the classics, libertarians have the view that objectivity and judgment just come naturally, not as the result of any sort of training. This results in unresolved questions, and exhibits the romantic as against the classical position.

The classical way of education is opposed to this "linguistic" way, from which pupils derive the conceited view that they have knowledge which they don't really have. The assumption is wrongly made that students can try to deal with advanced matters before they have got the foundations, but in fact the type of mind wanting to listen to all sorts of views before it has grasped a position, is not the type of mind well adapted to study.

The accusation of those who are really the dogmatists is that this is the imposition of a "dogma", that it is an attempt to censure, to force people to neglect certain parts of a field of enquiry. In fact, dogmatists don't realise the difference between what is dogma and what is not, namely, between a position which does not hinder study, which has continuity and encourages theory, and an absolute dualism, a view which sets

up barriers between questions of one sort and questions of another sort, and maintains that there is no possibility of reciprocal criticism.

The *political* notion of censorship, which is strictly restriction of the circulation of printed matter, etc., in order to prevent certain people from examining it and deciding for themselves about it, cannot be applied just simply to education, because censorship is *not* the same as censure. Persons taking this line of opposing censure are really in the position of wanting to censure or to disapprove of, disapproval. The whole notion of disapproval is itself confused, because where there is disapproval, it is not simply a matter of individual disapprovals or of "I disapprove of this," it is a matter of opposition between conflicting movements.

This connects with the conception you have of the individual as a separate agent, which can only land you in confusions of this type. The notion of abolishing repression, of making no one's decision depend on anyone else's decision, is atomistic, and far from clearing up the question would only get you imbedded in further difficulties because it would involve the setting up of a separate ego without any sort of content. When you object to interference with personal decision you imply that there is a single "I" without a multiplicity of tendencies.

Your slogan, "the abolition of repression," shows that you are proceeding on the assumption that such abolition of repression is possible, you are assuming without any grounds that opposition or conflict is something accidental, that there is a harmony of human nature. Contrary to this view, however, it is not possible to renounce certain of the conflicting tendencies, or to alter the environment to make this harmony possible.

The libertarian doctrine of impulses, particularly in sex, falsifies the actual situation, because conflicts are bound up with such impulses, and no simple solution, such as saying "go ahead!" is possible. In attempting to lay down a simple formula, you ignore actual interrelations, and take an atomistic view.

Like Godwin then, libertarians have a doctrine of a romantic or optimistic kind. Godwin, in fact, might well be called the patron saint of the libertarians.

The anarchist doctrine of the State is one that is non- or anti-theoretical, since it denies in effect that there is any such entity as the State. The notion is that the exercise of pressure is always arbitrary, that it comes from those who have no more right to it than anyone else.

Anarchism, in fact, amounts to the denial of any subject of politics. The anarchist hope, as expressed, for example, by Kropotkin, is that the voluntary association is capable of meeting any sort of problem, that, on the basis of goodwill, it is possible for us to get all we want. This rests on a fundamental atomistic assumption of the uniformity, the natural goodness of human nature, and was attacked by the socialists as involving a change of heart and not a change of social organisation, whereas on any sound view of the matter it would have to be the other way round.

It could be argued, of course, that the anarchists' theory of "ethics as prior to politics", has something in its favour as against those who maintain that everything is a matter of politics, and talk about universal emancipation, as distinct from the anarchist notion of particular emancipation. It may be said, too, that the doctrine of natural goodwill, while it has its own problems, is still superior to the notion of the solution of problems by self-will, or personal decision.

On the other hand, it has to be pointed out that to say "we know what we are" is just as much an illusion as to say "we are what we know", and involves a denial of the unconscious. As against the atomistic view of mind, we need the recognition of the existence of conflict, in short, the adoption of a pluralistic view.

In this connection we can refer to the work of Marx, who attacked atomistic views of society, and denied the existence of the absolute individual, and although he developed reductionism in other directions (reducing mind to social conditions), the point Marx makes would apply to any doctrine of the rights of man, or, as found in Godwin, to a view of natural goodness.

The general point can be made that liberty or freedom is a complex subject for detailed study, and the notion, typical of you libertarians, that freedom is something you declare, seems to me simply nonsense.

—WELLWISHER.

Turramurra.

(It is to be regretted that Wellwisher's closely argued letter should be directed at a "straw man." Readers of this magazine, as well as those who attend libertarian meetings, will realise that the issues discussed in the above letter do not relate to the beliefs held by libertarians but to the beliefs some other people hold about libertarians.

However, it may be of interest to take up the issues which have been raised in order to clear up some misunderstandings of the libertarian position.

Firstly, Wellwisher states that libertarians have an open platform, are uncritical, and are romantic because they "have the view that objectivity and judgment just come naturally". Anyone can take up libertarianism because it is not a theory but practice masquerading as theory.

As against this view it might be argued that libertarianism is not something that you take up but something which takes you up, "a way of life is not something that we adopt, by a voluntary decision, but something that adopts us, takes us as a vehicle, kindles a certain 'spirit' in us".[1]

The fact that the society upholds freedom does not mean that it has an open platform, that its members have no beliefs. Libertarians are realists and, as such, are against all "ultimates", social and mental. To say that libertarians "have no criticism of leading views" is to ignore the work done by members of the society in investigating and exposing authoritarianism in its many forms and especially the very notion of an authority, the conception of something whose nature it is to have a certain relation—in this case, that which ought to be obeyed.

Libertarian theory is, in fact, largely based on a critical appraisal of the views of Professor J. Anderson, M.A. (Glasgow), Challis Professor of Philosophy in the University of Sydney. While rejecting Anderson's ethical confusions and his Marxist bias, libertarians would agree, for example, that "if the obligatory (whether it is a question of 'religious duty' or any other) is what we are to obey *and the end is* what we are to pursue, *then nothing at all has been said as to what these things themselves are; and we do not know what to obey or to follow. If, on the other hand, we are not fobbed off with relativist conceptions but are given some specific commands or objectives, then we find them to be just as definite historical events as the things they are related to. In a word, when relativism is removed, we are left with simple historical relations of commanding and seeking—A wants X; B is commanded by C to do Y—and what is moral or good about X or Y does not appear. Nor does it appear that there is any question of what A or B 'is to do' or would be 'justified' in doing or would have 'reason' to do. We are simply presented with*

1. J. Anderson, Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy (A.J.P.P.), Vol. 20, p.138.

the wants of persons and the interrelation of these wants".[2] *Perhaps A. J. Baker's article in this magazine could be taken as an amplification of this position.*

Libertarians are concerned to promote freedom, but freedom is possible only when certain conditions are fulfilled, e.g., when there is freedom of discussion, that is, where there is not censorship of publications. Liberty "demands publicity and is opposed to all obscuring and confusing of issues".[3]

In this connection it is difficult to follow Wellwisher's distinction between censorship and censure. If all he means by censure is that a teacher may wish to dissuade a student from reading some material before he is able to grasp it properly, neither libertarians nor anyone else would wish to call it censorship. The development of a critical apparatus is a necessary condition for libertarianism.

However, to attempt a sharp distinction between political censorship and education is to take the atomistic view which Wellwisher is attacking, is to deny relations between institutions. As long as the materials for investigation, in the form of facts already discovered, are unavailable because they have been censored, then critical inquiry (or education) is hindered. It does not matter whether the censoring is done by the State, the Church, the League of Decency or a University Senate.

We also learn from our correspondent that libertarians have a slogan "the abolition of repression" and that their solution to sexual conflicts is saying "go ahead!" (though the direction is not specified). As a matter of fact, libertarians are not seeking solutions because solutions are not possible, "freedom is not something given or guaranteed to a person but something exercised *by a person, though there can, of course, be both opportunities and hindrances to that exercise . . . But in any case there can be no question of* settled *liberties or settled right; political rights" (libertarians would say* any *rights) "exist only as they are fought for, as the objects of effective demands, i.e., demands backed by force".*[4]

One of the things libertarians are concerned to do is to point out the connections existing between political and sexual repressions, "it is especially in regard to sexuality that the conception of sin finds application and that 'guilt' is felt; and it may be that, without exercising some command over the sexual life of the lower orders, authorities could never keep them docile".[5] *In particular, libertarians*

2. J. Anderson, A.J.P.P., Vol. 11, pp.3-4.
3. J. Anderson, "Education and Politics", A. & R., Sydney, 1931, p.27.
4. J. Anderson, A.J.P.P., Vol. 12, p.206.
5. J. Anderson, A.J.P.P., Vol. 19, p.261.

would agree with Anderson in emphasising "the central place of sexual repression in any repressive system, the way in which fear of sexuality carries over into fear of social disorder, the linking of chastity (which can never be other than distorted *sexuality) with quietism".*[6]

It may be agreed that, say, an exposure of the "Ideology of Chastity" may influence people's behaviour especially if they believe the exposure, but the point would be that only persons of a certain sort are likely to believe it; "ways of life are prior to policies, they frame *policies".*[7] *It would be the merest atomism to deny that there are connections between people's practices and their beliefs, though not, of course, a direct ideomotor relation.*

The sort of things libertarians are saying is: To say that God commands you not to copulate does not indicate why you should obey God's commands, does not indicate why you should not copulate. This is a far cry from asserting categorically that you should *copulate. Libertarians are opposed to both mental and social repression, they recognise that "the theory of a moral authority is merely an attempt to induce conformity to the motives dominant in certain minds, by elevating them to a transempirical level. This attempt owes some of its success to the tendency to seek safety and certainty, which is also, of course, a particular motive with a definite history".*[8] *But this involves a recognition of repressive forces and their ways of going on, a recognition that freedom cannot be guaranteed but struggles continually against authority in all its forms.*

It is obvious that Wellwisher could not have attended George Molnar's paper, printed in this magazine, or he would surely have hesitated to have called Godwin "the patron saint of libertarians". Libertarians oppose the State, but they are not romantics, utopians seeking the security of a return to the womb, for they know that the world cannot be made safe for freedom, that freedom exists only in struggle with authority. As a scientific student of society, a libertarian is not concerned with reform. "What he will be concerned with is opposition—what he will be above all concerned to reject is "social unity". And he will reject it not merely as a description of present conditions but as a conception of a future society . . . For the measure of freedom in any community is the extent of opposition to the ruling order, of criticism of the ruling ideas; and belief in

6. J. Anderson, idem. p.263.
7. J. Anderson, idem. p.257.
8. J. Anderson, A.J.P.P., Vol. 6, p.247.

established freedom, or in State-guaranteed benefits, is a mark of the abandonment of liberty. The servile State is the unopposed State".[9]

There is not space in this reply for a full working out of libertarian theory or for a full history of the libertarian movement in Sydney since 1927 *or even since* 1951. *However, I would suggest to Wellwisher that if he wants to understand libertarian theory rather than fulminate against his own fantasies he might first read this magazine carefully and then, having acquainted himself with the libertarian position on the specific issues raised, read* critically *"The Sexual Revolution" by Wilhelm Reich and certain of Prof. Anderson's more libertarian articles, particularly "Art and Morality"* (1941), *"The Servile State"* (1943), *"Some Remarks on Academic Freedom"* (1934), *"Determinism and Ethics"* (1928) *and "Realism Versus Relativism in Ethics"* (1933), *though the last three are marred by special pleading for a Marxist productive ethic.*

I would also remind Wellwisher that the Libertarian Society meets each Thursday at 1 *p.m. in the Psychology II Room to discuss and criticise "leading views" including moralism, authoritarianism and the "complex subject" of "liberty or freedom".—D.J.I.)*

9. J. Anderson, A.J.P.P., Vol. 21, pp.131-2.

Why Libertarians Are Not Intellectuals . . .

To the man-in-the-street, who, I am sorry to say
    Is a keen observer of life,
The word Intellectual suggests straight away
    A man who's untrue to his wife.

—W. H. Auden.

Printed by Perpetua Press. Published by E. Smilde, Keston Avenue, Wesmer, for the Libertarian Society.